



STRAY NOTES ON LEPIDOPTERA.

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A short time ago, Mr. Lionel de Nicéville, the author of that admirable handbook "The Butterflies of India, Burmah, and Ceylon," in offering some friendly criticism of my small pamphlet on Australian Butterflies,* published by the Natural History Association (now the the Field Naturalists' Society) of New South Wales, and originally written for a weekly newspaper, suggested to me that the butterfly which, for many years past, has been known in our local collections as *Libythea myrrha*, Godart, was in reality quite distinct from that species. Mr. de Nicéville, I believe, arrived at this conclusion from a comparison of the rough but characteristic figure of the Australian insect, contained in the pamphlet in question, with typical specimens of *L. myrrha*; and I must confess that the suggestion did not cause me much surprise, as I had noticed some months previously, when examining a series of *Libythea* from New Guinea, that certain specimens from Port Moresby, although agreeing in every particular with the Australian species, exhibited certain marked differences from the true *L. myrrha*. The genus *Libythea* appears to have been first recorded as belonging to the Australian fauna by Sir William Macleay, who called attention to the presence of a species of the genus (referring to the insect as *Libythea myrrha*) in a small collection of Cape York lepidoptera exhibited at a meeting of the Entomological Society of New South Wales in September,

* "Australian Butterflies: a Brief Account of the Native Families, &c." Sydney, 1889.

1866.* Mr. G. Masters† included the species in his Catalogue of Butterflies, on the authority of specimens obtained at Somerset by Mr. J. A. Thorpe, the taxidermist of the Australian Museum, during a collecting trip which he made to Cape York in the year 1867-68, and others subsequently collected in the same locality by Mr. Damel. The remains of one of the former specimens is in my possession owing to the kindness of Mr. Masters, and I am in a position to definitely state that the insect which has passed for many years in Australia as *Libythea myrrha* is quite distinct from that species, and is identical with the insect here described under the name *Libythea Nicevillei*.

It is hardly a matter of surprise that, once made, the mistake as to the identity of our butterfly should hitherto have escaped detection, as the species is apparently very rare, only one or two specimens existing in collections. As some doubts have been raised as to the claims of the genus *Libythea* to be regarded as indigenous in Australia, it may be well to state that there can be no question as to the authenticity of the specimens obtained by the collectors mentioned above.

LEMONIIDÆ.

LIBYTHÆINÆ.

LIBYTHEA NICEVILLEI, sp.n.

Head, palpi, antennæ, and body dark brown. Wings above dull smoky-brown, darker outwardly. Forewing inclining to dull ochreous-yellow at base and on basal two-thirds of inner margin, with the following bluish-white markings:—an elongated spot near costa about two-thirds from the base, divided by a dark vein, an ovate spot at end of discoidal cell, an elongate spot between veins 4 and 6, divided by vein 5, and a much larger rounded spot between veins 2 and 4, beginning at a point just beyond the cell

*Trans. Ent. Soc. N.S. Wales, i. p. lxi.

† "Catalogue of the described Diurnal Lepidoptera of Australia." Sydney, 1873.

and extending towards the hind margin ; the latter spot divided by vein 3 at about its anterior fourth. Hindwing inclining to dull ochreous-yellow at the base, hind margin darker, with a broad oblique ochreous-yellow discal band or fascia, which extends posteriorly from vein 7 ; this band is of uniform width throughout, clearly defined in front, and gradually effaced behind. Under-side :—Much paler in colour than above. Forewing beyond the anterior markings (which correspond with those of the upper side) and on the inner margin silvery-grey, the apical portion mottled with small irregular transverse brown lines ; the discoidal cell occupied by a rather bright ochreous-yellow patch, which is somewhat suffused on the costal margin. Hindwing silvery-grey, indistinctly irrorated with purplish, and closely striated with brown ; with indications of two indistinct lighter oblique bands extending from the costal and hind margins respectively to the inner margin near the base. Cilia ochreous-brown. Expanse 53-55 mm.

Somerset, Cape York, N. Australia ; and Port Moresby, British New Guinea.

As stated before, this species of *Libythea* has been confused with a species (*L. myrrha*, Godart), with which it has little in common, ever since the first specimens from Cape York were recorded ; but it will be evident upon even the most cursory comparison of the Australian form and *L. myrrha* that the species are abundantly distinct. In the Australian insect the forewings are comparatively broader, with the hind margins less distinctly angulated below the apex, and the disk ornamented with whitish markings. The characteristic transverse streak in the cell of the forewing of *L. myrrha* is replaced in our species by a single rounded spot, in which respect it resembles the Indian *L. rohini*, Marshall,* described from the Khasi Hills. The latter species, indeed, would appear to be its nearest ally, although sufficiently distinguished by having the markings on the hindwing white like those of the forewing, and by the presence of additional spots near the costa of the former.

* Journ. A. S. Bengal, XLIX., p. 248 (1880), and de Nicéville, "Butterflies of India, &c.," II., p. 303, pl. 24, fig. 114, ♀ (1886).

HESPERIIDÆ.

EUSCHEMON RAFFLESIÆ, Macleay.

E. albo-ornatus, var. nov.

A striking modification of this remarkable Hesperid was obtained at Dunoon, Richmond River, during the month of April by Mr. R. Helms, in which the fore and hindwings are intense blue-black in colour, and the markings silvery-white instead of bright yellow as in the typical form. Except for the presence of a larger number of blue scales near the hind margin of the forewing (in the shape of a gradually narrowing band) and on the underside, the type and the modification here recorded agree marking for marking. An examination of some thirty specimens of *Euschemon Rafflesie*, from various localities, has revealed little or no tendency to vary in colour or marking, a fact which increases the interest attaching to the Dunoon specimen.